

VZCZCXRO5910
PP RUEHDIR
DE RUEHDE #0245/01 1811420
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 291420Z JUN 08
FM AMCONSUL DUBAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6050
INFO RUEHZM/GCC C COLLECTIVE
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 3088
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 9251

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBAI 000245

SIPDIS

NEA/ARP BAGWELL AND MASILKO; DRL/ILSCR ANZALDUA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 6/29/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [PHUM](#) [AE](#) [RP](#) [IN](#)
SUBJECT: UAE PLANS PILOT PROGRAMS TO MANAGE INTERNATIONAL LABOR
CYCLE

DUBAI 00000245 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Paul Sutphin, Consul General, Consulate Dubai,
UAE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (U) Summary: As a follow-on to the January 2008 Colombo Process Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labor for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia (a.k.a. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue) and the subsequent Gulf Forum on Temporary Contractual Labor, the UAEG, India and the Philippines are initiating pilot programs targeting the entire migrant labor process. Specifically, the programs will focus on recruitment, in-country employment and repatriation in an effort to improve the management of the international labor cycle for both sending and receiving countries and to protect foreign workers in the UAE. End Summary.

January 2008 Labor Dialogue

12. (U) According to UAE Ministry of Labor (MOL) advisor Alex Zalami, the 2008 Colombo Process and Gulf Forum on Temporary Contractual Labor discussions in Abu Dhabi examined ways in which transitory worker sending and receiving countries can better collaborate in managing and legitimizing the international labor cycle, as well as strengthening the protection of foreign laborers. Specifically, the conferences addressed four elements of the labor cycle: Pre-Deployment Education and Information Sharing (including improving the process by which workers are recruited and informed about the conditions of employment, i.e., duration, salary); In-Country Protection (including ensuring that wages are paid, certifying that the worksite complies with established standards, and establishing an appropriate mechanism for due process to handle any employee-employer disputes); Pre-departure Preparation (educating the employee about resources in his native country that are available to him, such as micro-loans, training, etc.); and Repatriation Assistance (including establishing standards by which laborers are returned to their countries of origin).

Pilot Projects

13. (U) A key outgrowth of the January meetings was a subsequent agreement between UAE, Philippines and Indian officials to establish new pilot programs targeting labor cycle management. These non-binding trial initiatives, expected to be officially launched in August 2008, will place trained UAE staff in each country to handle all aspects of pre-deployment processing, including recruiting for vacant positions, arranging transportation of hired workers, securing of necessary visas, scheduling any required medical examinations, and handling other administrative requirements. Additionally, staff members will be available to liaise with UAE MOL, as necessary. These initiatives have been undertaken, in part, to eliminate the abuses in the current labor system, such as fraudulent recruiting, unscrupulous recruiters extorting money from workers, and contract swapping. Zalami told Pol/Econ Officers that the pilot programs will initially target certain segments of the labor demographic in each country, including unskilled and semi-skilled Indian construction laborers and hospitality and healthcare workers from the Philippines. He added that the pilots may be expanded, depending on need and/or initial results.

14. (SBU) As a supplement to the pilot projects, the UAEG recently established a commission of international labor experts. This commission, comprised of noted labor authorities such as Dr. Philip Martin (University of California Davis, Chair UC Comparative Immigration & Integration Program) and Ibrahim Awad (Director of the International Migration Program at International Labor Organization, ILO), among others, will

DUBAI 00000245 002.2 OF 002

examine the results of the initiatives and issue recommendations on improving the management of the labor cycle. Ultimately, the committee's findings will be used to inform future bilateral and multilateral labor discussions.

Comment

15. (C) Many important details of the pilot projects are still unclear, i.e., their anticipated length, number of Indian/Filipino workers expected to be processed, and the number/affiliation of the UAE employees who will work in India and the Philippines. Ultimately, though, the extent to which the pilot programs will succeed is largely dependent on the support of both the UAEG and the host countries. With high-level support, and sufficient human and other resources, these initiatives - when ultimately implemented - could institutionalize important and heretofore relatively uncontrollable and problematic elements of the labor cycle (i.e., recruiting) and could serve as a model for other labor-importing countries. [Zalami also noted that the GCC countries have been discussing establishing a regional labor management initiative]. While not a panacea, these projects nonetheless represent important contributions towards improving the way in which the UAE manages its substantial foreign labor population.

SUTPHIN